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A General

EPISTLE TO FRIENDS.

From that Ancient Servant of Christ,

William Dewsbury.

MY Dear Friends and Brethren, who are called forth of the World, and Pluckt as Brands out of the Fire, by the heavenly Power of God, and hath Convinced you of his Everlasting Truth, in the Light of Jesus Christ: My dear Friends, as you have received the Truth, in some measure, Watch and Pray, and Believe in the Name of Christ; that

his Power you may feel, in the Heavenly Inſpiration of his Bleſſed Spirit, to lay Judgment to the Line, and Righteouſneſs to the Plummet; that all that is not Obedient to the Light of Chriſt, may be kept down, and buried in the Heavenly Baptiſm, under the Sentence of Death; as it was and is with all the Children of God, who have received the Sentence of Death in our ſelves, that we may have no confidence in our ſelves, but alone truſt in the Living God, which will keep you all in the ſweet ſeaſoned ſavory Spirit of Life, in all your Words, Tradings and Dealings amongſt the Children of men; then will you be manifeſt, and known to all People to be the Salt of the Earth, who retains the ſavour of the Heavenly Life, in the Bleſſed Truth in you, that every one according to your meaſure, may be felt, upon all occaſions, continually ſtreaming forth, in the ſavory Spirit of Life, to the Comfort of

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your own Families, and the City of God, who over all is Bleſſed forever.

And my dear Friends, I deſire all to be watchful, that not any come ſhort of what is required of them, both Rulers of Families, and Parents of Children; while you have a day to be with them, call your Families together to wait upon the Lord, in the fear of his Name; certainly the Lord will anſwer the end of your endeavours, in cauſing the ſavoury Life to ſtream through you, to ſeaſon your Servants and Children, that the *Church of God* may be in every particular Family and Habitation of his People: Great is the concern upon my Spirit for the Children of all that profeſs the bleſſed Truth of God, that all Parents may ſtand in their places to bring up their Children in the fear of the Lord, while they are in their Minority and tender Years, and under their tuiſhion, not to be too indulgent to them, in ſuffering the Spirit of the World to rule in

them, to have their one wills, and to do thoſe things which are not according to the Truth of God, and to connive at their Children inſtead of reproving of them, and croſſing the Spirit of the World in them, and cauſing them to be content with ſuch things as is according to the Truth of our God; and for want of this careſulneſs in Parents, the Spirit of the World is ſtrengthened in their Children, when it ſhould be keep down by the heavenly Authority and Power that the Lord hath given to their Parents to rule over them, and not to let them have their own wills ſatisfied in any thing which is contrary to the Truth of God; and all in his Wiſdom ſo walk, with ſuch Moderation in all things, as well as clothed in modeſt Apparel, laying by all Superfluity; that your good Examples may raiſe up the witneſs of God in your Children; and for want of this care in ſome Parents, and being too indulgent, and full of lenity to their

Children

Children they grow Rude, Stuborn, Self-willed and Disobedient to their Parents, while they are under their tuition, to the wounding of the Hearts of their Parents, who neglected their duty, as to the Government of their Children in their tender Years: Therefore I desire and beseech you, in this weighty concern; that you slight not the oppertunity God gives you, to be in all things a good Example to all that live with you, both Children and Servants, that by your godly Conversation, and heavenly Exhortations you raise up the VVitness for God in your Children and Servants, and in exercising the power God hath given to you, to cross and keep down the evil nature, while they live with you; and when your Children grows up, take them to Meetings, and keep your Eyes over them, that they behave themselves soberly according to your Exhortations; then encourage them in wel-doing, so will the Lord bless your sweet and

heavenly Behaviour in your Families, that Servants will bleſs God whatever it was their lots to come into your Families in that their Spirits was ſweetly ſeaſoned, with the Truth, by your heavenly Behaviour and Care over them, *&c.* and your Children will magnifie the Name of the Lord for your bleſſed Care and heavenly Inſtructions, and godly Endeavors every way for their good in this World, and their eternal happineſs in the World to come, which will Crown the hoary Heads of their Parents with Joy; to ſee their bleſſed care and indeavours ſanctified to their Children, and to ſee their Off-ſpring to be made the Off-ſpring and Children of God; bleſſed be his Name forever, who heareth the Prayers of his People, who is exerciſed daily in the heavenly inſpiration of his holy Spirit, to call upon his holy Name, not only for Enemies, but for a bleſſing upon their Families, and for all that love the Truth of our God; theſe are

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the Families that are a ſweet ſavour to the Lord, that he guards with the Angels of his preſence, and will make them manifeſt and known to all People, that they are his choſen Jewels whom he will preſerve in the day when he will pour forth his Vengence upon the Heathen that know him not, and upon all the Families that call not upon his Name.

And if any of theſe Children of theſe heavenly minded Parents, when they are from under their tuiſhion, for want of watchfulneſs, grow into careleſneſs, and turn their backs of the bleſſed Truth of God, and trample all the care and good counſel of their Parents under their Feet, to ſatisfie their own wills in the Pride and Vanity of this evil World, to the wounding of the Hearts of their careful and loving Parents, who will be clear of their Blood, when they ſhall reap the fruit of their doings, except they Repent.

And all you young & tender People,

with others, that come among Friends through the education of your careful Parents, Masters or Mistrisses you have been under, I have a concern upon my Spirit to write to you, that you do not rest in an outward profession of the Truth, by what you have received by Education, but all watch to the heart searching Light of Christ in you, which will let you see you must be Regenerated and Born again, and so be made real and faithful Friends, by the heavenly inspiration of the powerful Spirit of God in you, which if you be careful upon your watch, you will see Judgment upon all in you that is not obedient to the Light of Christ, in whose Light you will see more Light, that will let you see your great necessity of the enjoyment of the Life which is hid with Christ in God, which will cause you to pray without ceasing, that the Lord would enable you to loath and abhor the Pride, Pompe & Pleasures of this evil World,

and to give you assurance of Gods Love to your Souls; and until you enjoy it in all places of your retirement, you will pour forth your Supplications with Tears to the Lord, as the blessed and heavenly Travellers and Companions did and doth, who could not find the Kingdom of God in outward observations, tho none more faithful in observing what is made known to them to be the will of God; but the Kingdom of God not consisting in outward observations, you in the Light press forward, according to your Spiritual Hunger and Thirst, in true poverty of Spirit, weeping and seeking the Lord your God, asking the way to *Zion*, with your Faces thitherward, that you may enjoy his Salvation for Walls and Bulworks.

Oh, you blessed Children of the Lord, lift up your Heads, and stay your Minds upon the Lord, patiently waiting upon him, he will turn your Sorrows into everlasting rejoycing, and

ſeal you up with the holy Spirit of Promiſe, & in the marrige union with himſelf, and will give you aſſurance of your eternal Salvation; then you will certainly know the Kingdom of God to be within you, and the anointing to teach you, which will enable you to delight in taking up the Croſs daily, in true obedience to the Light of Chriſt, all the days you have a beeing amongſt the Children of Men; then will you in the Name of the Lord trample upon the Pride, Pompe, Pleaſures and Vanity of this evil World, to the great comfort of your dear and careful Parents, Maſters and Miſtriſſes, whoſe tuiſhion you were under in your minority and tender years, and to all that walk in the pretious Truth of our God over all bleſſed forever, Amen.

And all dear Friends and Brethren, ſeeing the Lord who turneth the Hearts of men as Rivers of Water, and in his loving kindneſs ſo ordereth thoſe in Authority that the Priſon

Doors

Doors were opened once more in our day, to injoy Peace and Quietneſs, according to his bleſſed will, Praiſes be to his holy Name for evermore. I have a concern upon my Spirit that all Friends and Brethren have their Hearts affected as mine is, to live in the ſenſe of the Mercies of the Lord, and every one, for the time to come, endeavour to prevent the Enemy in what he hath been a doing of late years, to make diſ-union amongſt Friends and Brethren, by publick oppoſition of ſome, and others not patiently keeping in their places, hath alſo ſeparated; the difference being ſo publick, hath cauſed many a ſorrowful Heart, and given cauſe to the Enemies of God to rejoyce, which hath been a greater Exerciſe and Trouble to me then all the ſharp Perſecutions and Impriſonments I have endured for the Word of God and Teſtimony of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt &c. Therefore, in the Bowels of the Love of God, I beſeech

ſeech and enterat you all, who have been, or is concerned in what is before written, let the Love of God ſo abound that in it all labour for Peace and Unity, in Chriſt the Prince of Peace, who in love laid down his Life for us, when we were Enemies; and called many of his Children in our Age, to give up their lives in the heat of the day, weeks, months and years, to gather Enemies, unto the knowledg of, and union with God; therefore wait for the heavenly Wiſdom, to bear one with another; that if any who are Conſcientious to God, and Blameleſs in their Converſations, have a concern upon their Spirit, to declare in publick Aſſembly the Truth, to edifie the people; I beſeech you, in the love of God, that not any through diſaffection ſhew at leaſt any publick oppoſition; but rather ſpeak to the party in private, if there be any occaſion for him to be ſpoken to, ſo will the Enemy be prevented of caſting a ſtumbling block

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in the way of tender ſpirited People, that comes in love to be Comforted in the Meeting, and in ſo doing it will cauſe Love and Unity to abound amongſt Friends, that in the Love of God, all may be reſtored that hath been ſcattered, and brought again into Unity, to meet all together in the Everlaſting Truth, to feel the Healer of Breaches to reign, who is the Reſtorer of the Deſolate exalted in his Kingdom, in all your Hearts, to offer up a Peace-offering, in paſſing by all offences, that have cauſed Diſunion, and to binde you all up in the Unity of the Spirit, and Bonds of Everlaſting Peace, to meet all together, who profeſs Gods Bleſſed Truth, to Praiſe his Holy Name, all as one, and one as all, while we are here in theſe mortal Bodies, and forever, when time here ſhall be no more, even ſo be it with you all ſaith my Soul, in the Name of the Lord, to whom is my Prayers, that all may be accompliſhed as above written,

ten; until it be ſo with you I ſhall remain your exerciſed Brother, in the Kingdom of Patience and Tribulation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

William Dewſebury.

My dear Friends through the ſharp Perſecutions, that was paſſed through in the heat of the day, and many long Impriſonments; being nineteen years a Priſoner, in this Town of *Warwick*, and four of them being kept cloſe Priſoner; it hath pleaſed God to ſuffer my Health to be Impaired, that many times I am forc'd to reſt two or three times, in going to the Meeting in the Town, not being of ability of Body to travil, as in years paſt; I do, in the Love of God, viſit you with this Epiſtle, deſiring it may be carefully read in the Fear of the Lord, in the Aſſemblies of his people, that Peace and Eternal Unity may be amongſt you,

you, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *Amen.*

Given forth in the movings of the Peaceable Spirit and Word of Reconciliation, in the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is my Prayers, that all Convinced may wait to be made of the number of the Slain of the Lord, and conformable to Christ in his Death; that they may witness his quickening power, to raise them up in the Resurrection of Life, to enter into the Gates of Sion, *to dwell in the City of* new Jerusalem, *where Peace is within her Gates, and Quietness amongst all that have their Habitation therein, having Salvation for Walls and Bul-works, and are the blessed of the Lord, preserved by him, to the Honour of his Name forever,* Amen.

Warwick, *the 4th of the 10th month* 1686. W. P.

THE END.